

**Policy on Service on Advanced Degree Committees**

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**I. Governing Authority**

Advanced degree committees include all committees appointed for the purpose of conducting the master's comprehensive or doctoral qualifying examination or passing judgment on the merits of the master's thesis, master's project report or other capstone, or doctoral dissertation (as well as any equivalent degree-granting purpose). All such committees are, in principle, *ad hoc* committees acting on behalf of, and reporting to, the Administrative Committee of the Graduate Council. In practice, the Graduate Council delegates the authority to appoint such committees to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who is in turn asked to ensure that such committees are constituted in accordance with Graduate Council policy. Notwithstanding the delegation of authority in committee appointments, the basic principle remains that the decisions made by these committees are decisions made on behalf of the Council, not the instructional unit in which the student is enrolled. Nevertheless, the criteria upon which the student's work is judged are established by the academic program.

**II. Eligible Personnel**

Persons with the following qualifications can be eligible to serve as members of advanced degree committees as long as the committee membership accords with Section III. Committee Membership.

1. Any member of the Academic Senate of the University of California including:
  - Professors (UC APM 220, UCD APM 220)
  - Professors in Residence (UC APM 270)
  - Professors of Clinical “\_\_” (UC APM 275, UCD APM 275)
  - Acting Professor Series (UC APM 235)
  - Lecturers and Sr. Lectures with Security of Employment (APM 285)
  
2. Those previously eligible under categories 1, 3 and 4 are also eligible if they hold an emeritus/a title (and also continue to hold Educator Without Salary (EWOS) for previously category 4 individuals)
  - Graduate groups and departments may determine more restrictive roles for Emeriti members in the graduate program ([Graduate Council Policy](#))

[GC2011-02](#))

3. Members of the Academic Federation that hold one of the following appointments:
  - Health Sciences Clinical Professors (UC APM 278, **NOTE: This does not include Clinical Professors, Volunteer Series (UC APM 279)**)
  - Adjunct Professors (UC APM 280)
  - Supervisors of Physical Education UC (APM 300)
  - Unit 18 Lecturers, Unit 18 Supervisor of Teacher Education (Unit 18 MOU)
  - Academic Administrators (UC APM 370, UCD APM 370; **NOTE: Does not include Academic Coordinators (APM 375)**)
  
4. Members of the Academic Federation in one of the two following titles **must also hold an Educator Without Salary (WOS)** appointment (UC APM 283).
  - Specialists in Cooperative Extension (UC APM 334, UCD APM 334)
  - Professional Research series (UC APM 310)
  
5. Appointees in the Visiting Professor series (UC APM 230). This does not include appointees in the visiting titles in other series including Astronomers, Agronomists in the Agricultural Experiment Station, Professional Researchers, Specialists in Cooperative Extension, Project Scientists, and Librarians.
  
6. Individuals from outside the University of California or employees of other campuses or laboratories of the University of California who serve in categories not mentioned above, with special expertise and qualifications. In this case, the Graduate Advisor should submit an External Committee Membership Application and a curriculum vitae indicating the appointee's affiliation and title, what degree they hold, and the prospective appointee's special expertise or qualifications that are not represented on the campus. All appointees must be advised by the graduate program that no stipend will be paid for such committee service.

Committee members in this category are expected to serve on a one-time basis. Continuing service on advanced degree committees by external members requires an appropriate academic appointment (e.g. Adjunct Professor).
  
7. Individuals who do not have an eligible appointment under categories 1-5 and who the program anticipates will serve on multiple committees (unlike category 6) may serve on advanced degree committees provided they are:
  - Members of the student's graduate program  
and
  - Approved by the program as described in the program bylaws and the Dean of Graduate Studies to serve on advanced degree committees for that program.

Given this approval, the individual is granted eligibility for 3 years, while they continue to have membership in the program.

Eligibility to serve on advanced degree committees in one program does not confer eligibility to serve on committees in other graduate programs. Committee members in this category must be approved by each graduate group or program separately and be reviewed by the program(s) every 3 years for continued eligibility to serve.

Individuals who hold postdoctoral scholar appointments or UC Davis nonacademic staff titles are not eligible to serve on advanced degree committees.

### **III. Committee Membership:**

#### **1. Doctoral Qualifying Exam Committees**

Doctoral Qualifying Exam committee membership is governed by the Graduate Council Policy on Doctoral Qualifying Examinations ([GC2005-02](https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/committees/graduate-council/policies)) (<https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/committees/graduate-council/policies>).

#### **2. Thesis and Dissertation Committees**

Thesis and dissertation committees are appointed for the purpose of passing judgment on the merits of the master's thesis, master's project report or capstone, or doctoral dissertation.

In each committee, at least one member must be a member of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. At least one committee member must be from the student's major program, although programs may establish higher limits in their degree requirements. The Chair of each thesis/dissertation committee must be from categories 1, 2, 3, 4, or 7 in the "Eligible Personnel" section above. Programs may establish more restrictive policies in their bylaws.

Only two members from categories 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. in the "Eligible Personnel" section above may be appointed to serve on a single committee. No more than one member from category 6 and no more than one member in category 7 may be appointed to serve on a single committee, except with special advance approval from Graduate Studies. Programs may establish more restrictive policies in their bylaws. Any member of an advanced graduate degree committee should hold a degree at least equivalent to the degree objective of the student.

### **IV. Appointment of Committees**

Final approval of the membership rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies on the doctoral qualifying examination, Master Plan I committee and other committees specified by Davis Division Regulations for Higher Degrees. For such committees, the Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the student, the major professor and program faculty, recommends appointment of faculty members to serve on

examination committees and to review and pass judgment on the merits of each doctoral dissertation and master's thesis/project. Consistent with DDR500(C)3(b), a committee of a minimum of three shall be appointed by the Dean to pass final judgment on the merits of the Master's thesis or project.

For all other committees (e.g. Preliminary Examination or Master's Comprehensive Examination), final approval of the membership lies with the Graduate Program.

## **V. Committee Member Attendance**

For all examinations given in an oral format, it is the responsibility of all members of the committee to be in attendance for the entire examination. If there is an unanticipated and unavoidable absence, this will be explained in detail by the Chair in the report on the outcome of the examination, and a specific plan for completion of the examination within 72 hours by all members of the committee will be detailed. In the event that it is the Chair who is absent, the remaining members of the committee shall suspend the examination after waiting a reasonable time and after attempting to contact the Chair. In this case, the Chair shall report the result as "No Examination" and explain the circumstances in detail. The examination shall then be rescheduled and conducted in the same manner and format as intended for the original examination.

### Remote Participation by a Committee Member

Remote participation is defined as one member of a committee who is not physically present, but who is present via appropriate interactive voice technology; video may also be required, appropriate to the discipline and exam format (if there are whiteboard sessions, etc.). The remote participant must be able to interact with the student and the other committee members, and vice versa, in real time. The remote participant must have access to all the same examination materials as other committee members. A student may negate their approval for remote participation at any time prior to the examination, leading to rescheduling of the exam or reconstitution of a committee.

Remote participation by a member must be requested and approved in advance of the examination and noted on the report form provided to Graduate Studies. All examination committee members must make all reasonable efforts to be physically present during the entire examination; however, it is **permissible for one member (not the Chair) to participate remotely** if he/she cannot be present, provided the following criteria are met:

- It must be reasonable within the discipline that an examiner can participate remotely;
- The student, the Chair of the examination committee, and the Graduate Advisor must all review and approve the written remote participation request;
- The examiner is not within commuting distance, and has made all reasonable efforts to be present as detailed in a written remote participation request;

- The Chair of the examination committee and the remote participant must ensure that:
  1. The technology used for remote participation is available at the time of, and in the space reserved for the examination;
  2. The technology is tested prior to the examination;
  3. It is possible for the examination to meet the standards required by Graduate Council (see Policy on Doctoral Qualifying Examinations, i.e., the exam should be interactive and a group activity); and
  4. The student is comfortable with the technology and understands how to successfully interact with a remote participant; and any costs associated with using the technology must not be absorbed by the student. Funding for remote participation is not available from Graduate Studies.

## **VI. Reading Timelines**

In 1974, the Graduate Council adopted a policy stating that committee members are expected to read and comment on a thesis or dissertation **within four weeks**. Upon failure of a committee member to comply with the 4-week deadline, the Graduate Advisor may reconstitute the committee which will then be conveyed to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. However, this policy does not apply to summer periods for faculty holding 9 months appointments. It is expected that the graduate student, with cooperation of the committee, will coordinate the time lines for presentation of the dissertation to the reading committee in a manner such that all members of the reading committee can fulfill their responsibilities within the prescribed 4-week limit. In the case of a student who returns to campus following a lapse in registration or extended period on filing fee status and wishes to complete a thesis or dissertation, the reading committee should meet with the student to review the status of the work and determine an appropriate time line for completion.

When revisions to the thesis or dissertation are requested, all members have the responsibility to give the students timely feedback, and the Chair in particular should ensure that all members comply with this. If any members request further changes subsequent to the first set of revisions accomplished by a student, it is expected that members will not ask for additional changes addressing issues that reasonably could have been identified for the first revision.